04/23/2007 Events

By celebrating this Day throughout the world, UNESCO seeks to promote reading, publishing and the protection of intellectual property through copyright.

23 April: a symbolic date for world literature for on this date and in the same year of 1616, Cervantes, Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega all died. It is also the date of birth or death of other prominent authors such as Maurice Druon, K.Laxness, Vladimir Nabokov, Josep Pla and Manuel Mejía Vallejo. It was a natural choice for UNESCO's General Conference to pay a world-wide tribute to books and authors on this date, encouraging everyone, and in particular young people, to discover the pleasure of reading and gain a renewed respect for the irreplaceable contributions of those who have furthered the social and cultural progress of humanity.

The idea for this celebration originated in Catalonia where on 23 April, Saint George's Day, a rose is traditionally given as a gift for each book sold. The success of the World Book and Copyright Day will depend primarily on the support received from all parties concerned (authors, publishers, teachers, librarians, public and private institutions, humanitarian NGOs and the mass media), who have been mobilized in each country by UNESCO National Commissions, UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations, Associated Schools and Libraries, and by all those who feel motivated to work together in this world celebration of books and authors.

Through the world, people are marking the World Book and Copyright Day in many ways:
In Italy, the Cervantes Institute in Rome is organizing a public bilingual reading of the Spanish literary masterpiece, Don Quijote de la Mancha, from Saturday 21 to Monday 23 April. Choosing cultural diversity as the main theme of the Day, the Italian National Commission for UNESCO, is set to organize a round table on the problem of book squandering.

Similarly, while the Canadian village of St. Martins is launching the ‘St. Martins Booktown Initiative’, the Swiss Book Lobby has organized a national campaign called 'Switzerland is reading’, which includes a full set of initiatives and events designed to promote reading.

On Monday 23 April, the House of Catalonia in Paris celebrates St. Jordi’s Day, the day of the patron saint of Catalonia. The institute opens its doors offering books, roses and tapas from Catalonia to visitors.

The UNESCO Office in Mexico, in collaboration with the Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla, organizes a series of conferences, expositions, concerts and lectures. In the city of Mérida, Yucatán, the association Bibliotecarios del Sureste presents the play, The Vagina Monologues, by Eve Enseler.

As ever, the UNESCO Castilla-La Mancha centre informs us about the various activities taking place in Spain and Argentina, such as the “Festival Cervantino” in Azul, in the province of Buenos Aires.

Toronto University has chosen “books and women writers” as the central theme of the Day.
Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001501/150184e.pdf [1]

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